

CHRIST'S SWORD AND BRIDE

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The following is excerpted from John Phillip's commentary on Psalm 45:

"Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O *most* mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee" (Psalm 45:3-5).

This song is preeminently a wedding march, but not that of a carpenter; it is the wedding of a King, and a warrior King at that. For if the theme of the psalm is a wedding, the background of the psalm is a war with two major engagements. The first was fought at Golgotha and secured the bride's person for the King; the second engagement will be fought at Megiddo and will secure the bride's property.

The first engagement took place on a skull-shaped hill near Jerusalem. There the armed might of the world together with the principalities and powers of hell were ranged against Him. He wears the battle scars of that engagement in His body to this day. The next engagement will take place when the armies of the world mass in might at Megiddo in a vain attempt to prevent His return.

Between these two engagements the King woos and wins His bride. That is why He has His sword girded on his thigh. There is still a battle to be fought.

Come for a moment to the Tower of London where the crown jewels of England are kept. All the magnificent regalia used in the coronation of an English king are on display. As part of that regalia, there are four swords. Little need be said about three of them. One is called Curtana, a sword of great antiquity which once belonged to Ogier the Dane, a peer of the Emperor Charlemagne. Once Ogier the Dane drew that sword to slay the emperor who had killed Ogier's son, but a voice told him to put up his sword. Thus it is known as the sword of mercy. Two others are known as swords of justice. They were fashioned for Charles II from old blades used by the Roundheads against his ill-fated father and they represent the victory of a king over his foes. The most important is a massive blade known as the sword of state, the use of which helps us understand the reference to the sword in this psalm. When a new British king is crowned, he enters Westminster Abbey in the robes of a peer of Parliament preceded by the swords of mercy and justice and by the great sword of state. After elaborate ceremonies the archbishop takes the sword of state and hands it to the new king, saying: "with this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order." The great sword of state is then carried before the king for the rest of the ceremony.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty."

Look away from the great sword of state presented to an English king to the great sword of state Jesus has now girded on His thigh. It is the sword first seen in the garden of Eden in the hand of a flaming cherub. That flashing sword turned this way and that to keep fallen men away from the tree of life. We see that sword again at Calvary as foreseen by the prophet Zechariah: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The great sword of state that flamed at Eden's gate was to be sheathed in the Saviour's heart and quenched in His blood.

We see that sword again at Megiddo, for when the Lord comes He will use it to sweep His foes into a lost eternity.

He wears that sword now, upon His thigh. To Him has been given the real charge: with this sword "do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, restore the things that are gone to decay, punish and reform, and confirm what is in good order." With this sword He will found an empire which will last a thousand years [and for an eternity beyond that]. He will use it to usher in the millennial age and to enforce His rule "from the river to the ends of the earth."

He is glorious in His majesty!

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